CORNWALLIS
PAPERS

The
CORNWALLIS PAPERS

Abstracts of Americana

Compiled by
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PREFACE

The calendar of the American papers of Lord Cornwallis is a product of the program initiated in 1954 to locate and copy Virginia's colonial records in Great Britain. It provides, for the first time, a detailed listing of the papers of this controversial figure in the American War of Independence, and it will be welcomed by all students of that war.

Microfilm copies of the Cornwallis papers may be examined at the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia, the Virginia State Library, the Virginia Historical Society, and the Research Library of Colonial Williamsburg. Interlibrary loans of the film may be arranged through the Alderman Library.

The Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission is much indebted to Mrs. Alison Quinn for the preparation of the index to the calendar.

Williamsburg, Virginia EDWARD M. RILEY

INTRODUCTION

The Cornwallis Papers in the Public Record Office, London, are especially interesting to students of the American Revolution, since they include the papers of Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805), second Earl Cornwallis and first Marquis Cornwallis, known to Americans as the General Cornwallis who surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781.

The collection covers the period 1614-1854 and includes personal and semi-official papers of several members of the Cornwallis family, but according to the *Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* it consists for the most part "of the writings (official or personal) that grew upon the hands of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis, during his successive periods of service in the American plantations and . . . East Indian dependencies." This calendar is concerned only with the American letters and papers, except that an occasional stray manuscript (as a rule one from the Indian papers) will be mentioned in a summary way.

A suggestion of the special quality of Americana among the Cornwallis Papers is offered by the *Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts,* which was published in 1881, soon after the Papers were lodged in the Public Record Office. The *Report* remarks:

> Valuable chiefly for their letters from Admiral Arbuthnot, Sir Henry Clinton, K.B., and Lord Rawdon, the American Papers comprise many notable communications to Lord Cornwallis from subordinate actors on either side of the struggle that ended in Great Britain's reluctant consent to the freedom and separate national existence of the insurgent colonies. The searcher of their multifarious ingredients comes also on not a few official notes that may remove uncertainty from the details of important negotiations, and a yet larger number of memoranda which may be serviceable to American biographers, though at the present date they have little political significance or historic interest. The numerous "paroles" and documents touching prisoners and exchanges of prisoners during the American War of Independence are not unlikely to yield dates and other minute pieces of testimony, for which domestic annalists and personal illustrators have hitherto been vainly seeking.

Some of the American papers in the collection have been printed in part or in full in *The Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis,* edited by Charles Ross and published in London in 1859, but they are letters between Cornwallis and his superiors, or between Cornwallis and a few of his senior subordinates, with a few letters to or from American officials. And a part of the Clinton Cornwallis correspondence, in print, is found in the Cornwallis Papers themselves. No doubt some of the items have been published among the papers of other distinguished persons who are represented in the Cornwallis Papers. This calendar, though, is thought to be the first attempt at a detailed listing of the American papers in the collection.

The *Summary of Records* in the Public Record Office indicates that the Cornwallis Papers are classified as P.R.O. 30/11, and consist of 283 pieces; in this application, the word "piece" is simply the most specific designation in the classification of the Papers, and it may refer to as little as a single printed booklet, or to as much as a group of more than two hundred letters, and there are in fact some thousands of separate letters and papers in this collection.

The Table of Contents in this calendar lists the 62 pieces which figure in the abstracts, with descriptive titles of the pieces based on entries in the Public Record Office *Class List of Gifts,* but much briefer than those entries. This Table will enable the reader to find the page on which begin the abstracts of items in a given piece, but a glance at the abstracts will show how far short the Table falls of giving an adequate idea of what a piece includes.

The reader will note that P.R.O.30/11/1-7, 58, and 60-110 have been abstracted in detail. P.R.O.30/11/270 and 274-277 were carefully examined, and abstracts were made of a few letters from P.R.O.30/11/270, 275, and 277; P.R.O.30/11/274 and 276 contain nothing relevant to America.

The other pieces of the Cornwallis Papers were not examined, since the *Class List of Gifts* indicated that they were irrelevant because of the date or the nature of their contents. It is, of course, possible that an occasional item of Americana may have wandered into the Indian section or elsewhere in the Cornwallis Papers, just as some Indian items, and a few family letters, have certainly turned up among the Americana, but only an exhaustive search of the whole collection could be expected to discover such strays.

The abstracts which make up this calendar were prepared during about seven months of 1961, in the form of survey reports made for the Virginia Committee on Colonial Records. The abstracts were written

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as quickly as the papers could be examined, with little concern for consistency, or style, and without any attempt to supply missing names, or to verify or normalize spellings. Some of the material shortcomings of the abstracts will be corrected by the index, and many of them can be put right at once by the student of history, for whom this calendar is intended.

It is impracticable to revise and emend the abstracts by a fresh examination of the Cornwallis Papers, and it would be unwise to make any corrections in the abstracts without reference to the Papers. For this reason, the abstracts (aside from correction of a few typographical and other obvious mistakes and an attempt to follow a consistent form of citing date, place, and correspondents) are now printed exactly as they appear in the survey reports, on the assumption that their usefulness will make amends for their faults.

Since the Cornwallis Papers are subject to Crown Copyright, all requests for permission to quote or otherwise make use of them should be addressed to the Public Record Office.

The compiler must thank the Public Record Office for permission to publish this calendar, although the Record Office is in no way responsible for it or for any of its errors; and he would like, at the same time, to publish his gratitude to the Assistant Keepers, and others in the Public Record Office, for their ready and generous help and counsel.

Williamsburg, September 1969 GEORGE H. REESE

troops, zeal of Gov. Martin; want of
ded. Copy. Enclosed in letter at 249,

d. Same to same. Reports his opera-
of 15 March, and those after it up to
plan for the winter campaign; move
Virginia; his misfortune of 17 January
detail. Copy.

North Carolina militia paroles. A list
nties.

nce of a plan concisely stated and
xcellency Sir Henry Clinton, by Hector
ng the colony of Virginia to His Majes-
ribes James and York Rivers, tribu-
esents three plans of action: (1) co-
lis's forces, entailing penetrating coun
nd N. Carolina, with base at City Point;
uth side of the James, to obstruct com-
at Manchester; (3) subjection of the
t Richmond and outposts at Yorktown,
perhaps Jamestown; vulnerability of
s and York; importance of the region
gs and defence of Richmond; critical
t.

ork. Clinton to Cornwallis. Refers to
zzled at small number of his troops;
Cornwallis to the Chesapeake, now de-
n Carolina determines summer cam-
inted not to have troops from Corn-
303, duplicate.

rk. Same to same. Has heard news of
suggests Cornwallis take a frigate to
ctions for use of reinforcements; Corn-
tions as they move north, since Clinton
peake unless Washington goes there in
of extracting co-operation from the

gton. Major Craig to Cornwallis. Re-
ing Wilmington on 29 Jan.; operation

against rebels entrenched near the town, who were scattered; his resolution to remain at Wilmington; foraging expedition in mid-March, minor engagements; capture of Mr. Harnett, a notorious rebel; his own warm appreciation of help from Capt. Inglis of *Delight*. Last page stained.

PAPERS RELATING TO THE AMERICAN COLONIES

P.R.O.30/11/6

A box of loose sheets, numbered as folios 1-403.

1 8 Dec. 1781. New York. James Hubard to Major Ross(?). To say farewell to "my lord"; written on his way to Jamaica. Torn into two pieces.

2 Cover to letter at 1, apparently, endorsed "Letter from Mr. Hubard to Major Ross," but not addressed. The addressee's name perhaps Riss or Ress.

3-4 30 May 1781. Headquarters, New Windsor. Geo. Washington to Sam. Huntington. Greene's dispatches; action at Campden; rumors of embarkation at New York, taking of Pensacola, Robertson to succeed Phillips in Virginia. Copy.

5-6 31 May 1781. New Windsor. Washington to Lafayette. Had meeting with Rochambeau; decided an attack on New York preferable to a southern operation; French to march from Rhode Island; his attempt to get troops from the states; rumors the British to evacuate New York; Lafayette to rejoin Washington when he chooses. Copy.

7-8 May 1781. New York. Mr. Loring(?) to Major Skinner. Draft. On exchange of prisoners and especially Gen. Burgoyne.

9 Cover to letter at 7(?); no address, but endorsed as the proposed letter from Mr. Loring to Major Skinner in reply to a summons to Gen. Burgoyne.

k. Clinton to Balfour. On provision
rmain wants Gov. Maxwell to have as
ies for the Bahamas, Balfour to en-

uth. Leslie to Cornwallis. *Orpheus*
sailing this tide, etc.; report that a
om Europe for the Chesapeake or for
ı. Digby following it; was unable to
one armed vessel, under repair; Mr.
'uadeloupe or the *Fowey* up James

ampton Road. Peter Aplin to Corn-
rnwallis's commendation of his con-
en.

th. Major Rd. England to Lt. Hal-
15; embarkation is going on, though
stion of payment for horses for Gen.

h. Capt. G. W. Vallaney to England.
ants for payments made to Hessian
gone up the James River on an ex-
ns for use of some £10,000 in his

Lynhaven Bay. Capt. W. Peacock
account of voyage from Charles
prize to the rebel letter of marque
ed from Portsmouth, Virginia, with
meet the *Blonde;* Digby's fleet and
t Charles Town; 4 or 5 vessels en
Chesapeake Bay or Baltimore; the
rs aboard.

th. Leslie to Cornwallis. Handling
ll ready to land.

ıday 22 July 1781(?). Memoranda
ft Suffolk 9 p.m. on 18 July and
uly at entrance of the Nansemond;
sland on the Thursday; on 20 July
sland; Sir Peyton Skipwith brought

news from Williamsburg about the Marquis's position, location of British troops; gives news from a ship at James's Island; failure in an attempt "to bring Jack off undiscover'd" from Bird's House; intelligence by a Negro from Petersburg, and of the Marquis's party annoying boats near Westover; visit from Mr. Hardiman and Mr. Epse with news of rebel movements, under fire at Hardiman's Bluff; anchored at Sandy Point; on Sunday sailed early, and intercepted a sloop from Chickahominy Creek with a Mr. Calvert and his family on their way to Norfolk; anchored off Hog Island at nine o'clock.

325-326 19 July 1781. Portsmouth. Leslie to Cornwallis. All the ships will be out on this morning's tide; he will send word of when he sails.

327-328 19 July 1781. Portsmouth. Same to same. Encloses a letter; various small bits of news.

329-330 20 July 1781. *Richmond,* Hampton Road. Capt. Hudson to Leslie. He has orders countermanding Clinton's expedition by sloops from Portsmouth; is available to take troops to New York, if they can leave at once.

331-332 20 July 1781. Camp. Capt. Rd. Hutcheson to Cornwallis. Wishes to sell out of the service.

333-334 22 July 1781. The substance of Mr. Harding's plan for the payment of the Nezamet. Apparently a stray from Cornwallis's Indian papers.

335-336 20 July 1781. *Richmond,* Hampton Road. Hudson to Cornwallis. Is ordered to take command of the ships accompanying the embarkation from Portsmouth; lists ships remaining at this anchorage under Capt. Robinson.

337 23 July 1781. Camp, Isle of Wight. Col. J. Parker to Cornwallis. Sends 12 naval prisoners, requests as many men from the *Minerva*'s crew in exchange.

338-339 30 July 1781. Wilmington. Craig to [ ]. 600 or 700 Tories are in arms and disarming everyone else they can; would like to recruit among them; particularly wants bayonets for the Highlanders; his own moves, concern for Cornwallis's inconvenience; reports a message of the French Ambassador to the new governor that a French fleet will be on the southern coast. Mostly in cipher.